

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 1, line 7 as with the following amended paragraph:

Vendors supply network components or services with INF (information) files which contain, for example, information describing names of required network components or services, driver files, dependencies and registry updates to be performed. For example, Microsoft MICROSOFT® company provides INF files for Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol (TCP/IP).

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 2, line 7 as with the following amended paragraph:

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FIG. 1 illustrates an exemplary computer system 22 that includes computers 12a, 12b...12k connected through network adapters 16a, 16b ... 16k to a computer network 10. The network adapters 16a, 16b...16k are cards installed in the computers 12a, 12b ... 12k to enable the computers to communicate with the computer network 10. The computers 12a, 12b ... 12k run operating systems 24a, 24b ... 24k, for example, Windows WINDOWS NT® 4.0™ operating system. The operating systems 24a, 24b ... 24k include binding engines 26a, 26b ... 26k. The binding engines review network components and services installed in a computer. They identify which components or services are new and make the necessary registry entries to bind the network interface cards 16a, 16b ... 16k to the new components or services.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 3, line 21 as with the following amended paragraph:

b
For example, assume that the computer 12a runs the operating system Windows WINDOWS NT® 4.0™ operating system, and that a software program, for example, Intel's Netport Express-INTEL'S® NETPORTEXPRESS™ software is to be installed

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from a disk 28 (e.g. a compact disk) to a computer 12a. An automatic installation agent 29 is included on the disk. A network administrator would insert the disk into the disk drive 18a. The network administrator would then start the software program startup process. This software program startup process is represented by the box labeled initiation 30 in the flowchart of FIG. 2.

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Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 4, line 21 as with the following amended paragraph:

Following initiation 30, the software program specifies 32 the information (INF) file 15a, as well as the name of the network component or service 14a that is to be installed to the installation agent 29. The installation agent 29 determines 34 whether the INF file is valid. For example, in a Microsoft Windows MICROSOFT® WINDOWS NT® 4.0™ operating system environment, the installation agent 29 uses a well-known application program interface (API) method to determine whether the INF file is valid for use in a Windows WINDOWS NT® 4.0™ operating system environment. The installation agent 29 also checks that the network component or service 14a to be installed at the computer 12a is available in the computer system 22. If the installation agent determines that a particular INF file 15a is not valid, it stops 36 the installation process. If the installation agent 29 determines that an INF file is valid, it continues with the installation process.

A5

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 5, line 13 as with the following amended paragraph:

Following successful validation of the INF file, the installation agent invokes 38 the operating system program setup function to install the network component or service 14a, using the INF file as the parameter and specifying the name of the network component or service 14a to be installed. The operating system 24a then installs 40 the network component or service 14a to the computer 12a. Windows WINDOWS NT®

4.0TM operating system, for example, accomplishes that by using a "setup.exe" executable file. This executable file is located in the "System32" folder of the computer 12a.

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 6, line 11 as with the following amended paragraph:

The foregoing techniques may be incorporated into any product software setup program (e.g., a software setup program written with ~~InstallShield~~INSTALLSHIELDTM software or ~~Wise~~WISETM software) that installs network components. Additionally, the techniques may be used as a mass deployment mechanism for a network component or service. A mass deployment mechanism is used to automatically install a network component or service on a large group of computers attached to a network. Also, the techniques described herein may be adapted for use with operating systems other than ~~Microsoft Windows~~ MICROSOFT ® WINDOWS NT ® 4.0TM operating system. Various features of the system may be implemented with hardware, software or with a combination of hardware and software. For example, some aspects of the system can be implemented in computer programs executing on programmable computers. Each program can be implemented in a high level procedural or object-oriented programming language to communicate with a computer system. Furthermore, each such computer program can be stored on a storage medium, such as read-only-memory (ROM) readable by a general or special purpose programmable computer, for configuring and operating the computer when the storage medium is read by the computer to perform the functions described above. The techniques provide a faster and more efficient way to install network components and services and minimizes network administrator effort during the installation process.